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ly its diameter 3° , therefore the pole-star will be seen by us at sometimes under an angle of $53^{\circ} 4''$ (taking our latitude at $54^{\circ} 34''$), and zenith distance $36^{\circ} 56''$, at the other extreme $56^{\circ} 4''$, and zenith distance $33^{\circ} 56''$. Thus it is plain it will not be often seen under the same angle, but the utmost extreme in this case amounts to no more than 3 degrees.

Another apparent change of place is occasioned by the precession of the equinoctial points, but this is too small to be attended to in some years by any common observer; only amounting to one degree in $71\frac{1}{2}$ or 72 years. However, upon this subject see Newton, Ferguson, &c. upon Astronomy. The last cause, (that I have read of,) of change of position in stars, is occasioned by aberration of light, but this amounts to less than the former: see Smith's optics. There are no other causes of apparent change of position of the fixed stars that I ever have heard or read of. For parallax they have none, or at least if we believe Dr. Bradley, who was reckoned a very excellent observer, it must be less than a second of a degree. They have not even annual parallax where we have the diameter of the Earth's orbit, or above 190 millions of miles for a base line or its extremities for points of view. How inconceivable then, must the distance be of those sparkling points, which when viewed from the extremes of a space of 190 millions of miles, still remain to us under the same angle: we may wonder but cannot even imagine. I shall conclude with recommending it to "Star-gazer" to re-observe his observations, and I have no doubt but he will find the principal error lies in the observer, not in the thing observed.

I also saw in your October publication, additional remarks by "Star-gazer," but as I am no classical

scholar, I do not know exactly whether Cicero or Ptolemy was the first writer, and as Ptolemy's catalogue of the stars is the most ancient that I have seen, and he makes only 13 stars in Cassiopeia, and none of them larger than the 3d magnitude; now if Ptolemy's catalogue preceded Cicero's writings, it perhaps might be that Cicero framed this clause, "Obscura species, &c." from the diminutive number, and magnitude of its stars, stated by Ptolemy. More modern writers have augmented their number: viz: Flamstead, Tycho, &c. Flamstead makes the number of stars in Cassiopeia 55, but most of them are telescopic stars; the more modern catalogues make 64, but none of them have increased in size; therefore "Star-gazer" is under a great mistake if he conceives that constellation to contain stars of the 1st and 2d magnitude, for I assure him the 3d magnitude is the largest contained therein. If "Star-gazer" would be candid enough to favour us with the detail of any errors in which he may find himself, I shall do what I can to set him right, but alas! it is but little that has fallen to my lot.

A MECHANIC.

Belfast 9th November, 1813.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE read with much satisfaction, in your Magazine for October, "A Prospectus of a Statistical and Parochial Description of Ireland; by William Shaw Mason." Such an arduous undertaking deserves the thanks and support of the whole Irish nation: but, if the compiler is obliged, in every instance, to depend for information on the clergy of the established church, I am very much afraid the account

of some parishes will be but indifferently written. Many of the established clergy know next to nothing of the parish in which they are placed. They are so frequently changed, and have so little opportunity, and still less inclination to investigate, with an impartial eye, the manners and customs, &c., of the people, that it cannot be expected they will be able, in many cases, to furnish correct information.

I am aware, that a majority of that respectable body is fully equal to the task; but in several instances. I fear, it will be otherwise. Nor am I, altogether, without proof of the fact, as the following anecdote will testify. A certain vicar lately applied to the writer of this article for some statistical information relative to a respectable parish in the north of Ireland. In the course of conversation the clergyman observed, that he knew very little about the parish, and with regard to the *character of the people*, he declared, he *would not give it favourable!* Now the truth is, there is scarcely a more respectable and intelligent parish in Ireland. But what could be expected from the *liberality of a Divine*, who asserted in the author's hearing, that *there was not a gentleman in the whole United States of America. That they were all sprung from thieves and robbers!*

For these reasons, I think the compiler would do well to write to the Presbyterian and the other clergymen through the kingdom, who have in many respects more *local* knowledge, and a more intimate acquaintance with the people than the clergy of the established church. I think the Belfast Magazine would be an excellent vehicle for conveying parochial descriptions to the public. There errors could be pointed out, and impartial and authentic

information communicated. I am, Gentlemen, yours, &c.

G.*

Nov. 17th, 1813.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

THE following instance of disinterested benevolence in the public cause, in the character of the late Granville Sharp, a man whom nothing seems to have escaped when he could be instrumental in doing away an evil, or in the promotion of a good, is extracted from the Philanthropist.

Mr. Granville Sharp, having no distinct trade or profession, was honoured by government with an appointment in the office of Ordnance in the Tower. But a man of such independence of mind was quite unfit for a tool of office. This the event soon showed; for being called upon to ship cannon to America, and conceiving the American war to be unjust, he demurred at the execution of the order; soon after which, reasoning more closely upon the subject, he resigned his post, determining not to do that which his conscience protested against as unjust.

In consequence of his disinterested integrity on this occasion, the Congress had such an opinion of his uprightness, that altho' an Englishman, they selected him without any personal acquaintance with him, and without his knowledge, as mediator between themselves and the government of Great-Britain in their dispute with the latter. To forward their design, they sent Dr. Franklin

* A writer in the October Magazine, page 268, has adopted my signature, without any specification, this is unfair; I have made use of the above since the very commencement of the Magazine, see the article Combustion, &c., No. 1.